

CHARLOTTE MONTEFIORE.

She was the wife of Joseph Horace Montefiore, of London, and died soon after the birth of her first child, and when still a very young woman, July, 1854. This lady, a staunch advocate of Jewish reform, issued, a year before her death, "Einige Worte an die Juden," which was, strictly speaking, an effusion of religious sentiment. The contents of this book is composed of contemplations of the Divinity and the everlasting, indestructible significance of Judaism, which, set forth by the authoress in enthusiastic and poetical language, inspires her readers with sympathetic enthusiasm. To her also may be attributed the graceful and elegant narration, "The Isle of Jewels," although it has recently been affirmed that "the book was written by another lady who lives on her own estate in the neighborhood of London, and who devotes herself to literary labors, the culture of her children, and, more particularly, to the wants of the neighboring poor."

ANNA MARIA GOLDSMID

was the daughter of Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid de Palmyra, Baronet—celebrated in virtue of his services rendered for the emancipation of the Jews of England—and sister to Sir Francis Goldsmid, a member of Parliament, who died suddenly, May 2, 1878. Under the guidance of her highly cultured father, who read Homer and Horace with her, she received the benefits of a very careful education, and devoted her leisure to science, and particularly to the purposes of religion, and the elevation and condition of schools. To advance upon one hand the cause of enlightenment among her coreligionists, and on the other to give her Christian countrymen a better idea of the energetic faith of the Jews, she, in 1839, translated into English twelve sermons by the Hamburg pulpit orator, Gotthold Solomon. In the preface of her translation she beautifully says: "If, in religious discussions, the people of all creeds would seek to discover the commonities instead of the diversities, how many of the struggles and sorrows that mar God's beautiful earth, would vanish! Let us then strive to know each other, let us endeavor to understand our fellow beings with the same spirit which actuates us to seek a knowledge of God, and we will, in so much more, be able to emulate him in universal love, in universal charity."

With the noble object of rendering a service to Judaism, and of spreading also in England the exalted ideas of the mission of Israel, the character of its teachers, and the religious futurity of mankind, she delivered an excellent translation of Philippon's "Development of Religious Ideas in Judaism, Christianity and the Islam" (1855). The general historical and even medical notes which she added to translated literature are just as much credit to her rendition as to her talent and ingenuity. Several years ago she also translated from the French I. Cohen's "Les Decides," which had appeared in 1869, and the dissertation, "Persecution of the Jews of Roumania."

In fact, Miss Goldsmid possesses an extremely developed mind, and presents altogether a very original appearance. "Miss Goldsmid, of whom you remind me," Vernhagen von Ense wrote to a lady friend, June 13, 1847, "and whom (at the suggestion of Mr. Asher), I followed into the museum, has an eloquent and engaging physiognomy."

With much enthusiasm and energy Miss Goldsmid works for the improvement of feminine schools and academies. In spite of her advanced age, she, several years ago, undertook a journey through Germany in order to learn the German methods of instruction at Autopsie, and to establish schools in London similar in plan to those of Germany. One of her more recent works is an address, held in one of the schools of London, and upon request, given to the public; the subject of this address is: "What girls should learn, mothers should do, and wives should seek to advance."

(To be Continued.)

The Towers of Silence.*

BOMBAY, India, February, 1881.

What Beacon Hill is to Boston, Murray Hill to New York, Nob Hill to San Francisco, Malabar Hill is to Bombay, for its aristocratic summit is closely dotted with the palaces and bungalows of native Princes and affluent Anglo-Indians, but the borders of Malabar Hill fall just upon the outskirts of the native city on one side and are lapped by the crazy ripples of the Indian Ocean on the other. The climb up from the esplanade is picturesque to a degree, and the well-kept lawns, the groups of statuary, the broad, cool verandas inclosed with Venetians peek out at one from unexpected perches on

the side of the hill, with a swiftness of change suggestive of the tricks of the irrepressible Fakir. But having them all below us we at last reach the vicinity of the "towers of silence."

From the midst of a grove of palms rise two circular towers, near which stands a large building looking not unlike some public institution in any well-to-do city in America, but which is in truth one of the temples which seem so necessary in every Indian landscape. The "towers of silence"—what does not the fancy picture when that name is heard for the first time. A religious retreat, where one wearied with the din and turmoil of the city below may enter and find peace and rest. Such a retreat as Taine must have reached in the Pyrenees when he felt that in such a spot and with such influences the Imitation must have been written. Or perhaps it is designed as a place of punishment, and persons caught in crime and brought here to wear out in silence their term of sentence, which will last till life flickers feebly and hope dies. Away runs imagination, but a talkative "wallah," or, literally speaking, fellow, who is our guide, soon brings back wandering fancy by the appalling announcement that the towers are in truth the Parsee cemetery of mortuary.

Directly a Parsee dies he is brought to the temple, and then after the other rites are performed the body is disrobed, anointed with sacred oils; after that it is taken to the towers, which are about thirty feet in diameter and entirely open at the top; and then placed upon an iron grating for the vultures to come and devour the flesh. In every direction one can see the majestic palms bending low with their burdens of vultures and kites waiting for new prey; the air resounds with their hungry cawing, while it is also laden with the sickening odor of decaying flesh. While a body is being placed in position the edge of the tower is filled with cawing, chattering spectators, hungry to make the first plunge upon the victim. With one accord they dash down out of sight, and one knows by the change from tumult to quiet that the Parsee interment is taking place. That which but a short time ago was a human being, with hopes, and fears, and aspirations such as still animate us, who gaze transfixed with horror, is being torn shred by shred and carried into the air, to be dropped and picked up, and quarreled over, or else to be consumed with genuine satisfaction. No sooner does a sated bird fly on lazy wing to some far-off tree top to sleep off the effects of his gluttony than a fresh one arrives upon the scene to carry on the hideous work. Others sweep down upon us, the living, and brush our very faces with their noisome wings. Besides us stand some Parsees, who watch the circling birds with loving interest, and one English-speaking guide tells us that they frequently stand and watch them till they know their dead to have been consumed. As soon as the birds have cleaned all the flesh from the bones, they are dropped into a well at the bottom of the towers, where they are covered with quicklime and consumed. The tower is then flooded and deodorized, and so, it is claimed, there is no taint in the air, but any one having the sense of smell unblunted feels that that boast is not founded upon truth.

Night which in India treads upon the heels of day too closely for one to ever taste a twilight drove us down the hill and back into the thronged streets of the city before we had watched as long as we wished, but we had seen enough to turn with a sickening soul from the religion which makes this awful custom a necessity. We had stood beside the Ganges and watched the Hindoos sprinkling the ashes of their lately cremated dead upon its sacred bosom. The crooning tone, the quiet hour, the intense earnestness, had melted our cold Western hearts, and we had wept from sympathy. The Hindoo and the Parsee had each shown us how superior their customs were to those practiced by "Christian dogs," and we had by silence at least given consent to their form of interment; but we came back to our own belief in the grave and the worm with renewed devotion, for we remembered that it was not from the sacred bosom of the Ganges, neither was it from the birds of the air, that we received the knowledge of truth.

Correspondence.

We do not hold ourselves responsible for the opinions and assertions of our correspondents. No article will be accepted unless the full name and a description of the writer is given us (not necessarily for publication). All articles intended for publication in this journal must be written on one side of the paper only, and addressed "To the Editor of the JEWISH ADVANCE."

NEW YORK, April 17th, 1881.

To the Editor of the JEWISH ADVANCE.

The community here has been greatly excited for the past week by the publication of the attempted blackmail on Mr. Strasburger, a wealthy Jewish resident of this city, and the attempt at abducting his daughter, the details of which you have no doubt read in the daily papers. The facts in this case are an apt illustration of the old

adage that "Truth is stranger than Fiction." The numerous letters threatening untold disaster to the family unless the demands of the writers were satisfied; the bold scheme for abducting the little daughter from Sunday school, which was frustrated by the foresight of Dr. Huebsch; the mysterious air which pervaded the whole affair, and the desire to connect it with Nihilism; the various disguises assumed by the detective employed to track the conspirators; the ruse by which the one named Sagart was captured and met his sudden but deserved death; and finally the capture and confession of the projector of the Scheme, Vogel by name, fill up a chapter of incidents as thrilling as anything to be found in the pages of Emil Gaborian or Belot, and which, if brought to the notice of either of these dramatic writers, would surely prove the theme of a novel or play more intensely interesting than anything they have thus far produced. Vogel has been held in default of \$10,000 bail and will shortly be brought to trial and receive the sentence he so well merits.

The Passover services at the various Synagogues and Temples drew forth fair audiences, mainly composed of members of the fair sex, who thus had an opportunity to display their new Spring toilets and bewitching new bonnets, the chance being doubly welcome, owing to the ushering in of some delightful Spring days, which were anxiously looked for after our long and severe winter. The holidays were but slightly observed by the business portion of the community which goes to show, that the majority of our people rely more on buying their way into Elysium than by searching it through the effects of prayer.

New York, which, from its situation, should be the healthiest city in the world, has become, through the inefficiency of its officials and the greediness of politicians, a hotbed of disease. Our citizens who are notoriously meek, have at length been aroused to the dangers that beset them, and indignantly demand that the health of the city shall be protected and left free from the bargains of politicians. The Mayor has preferred serious charges against the Police Commissioners, who have charge of the Street Cleaning Bureau, for neglect of duty. A bill for giving the Mayor full power to cleanse the streets and making him responsible for the perfect fulfillment of these duties was defeated in the State assembly by those politicians, who prefer to line their own pockets with the gains of jobs and corruption rather than by saving the lives of thousands who are thus sacrificed by the cupidity and neglect of those chosen to legislate for them.

A new and interesting experiment is that of the Mount Sinai Training School for nurses, which aims to train up young ladies, who are so inclined to a profession at once both noble and profitable. It is a branch of the Mount Sinai Hospital, and a building has been secured as a home for the pupils where they will receive every comfort. Christians as well as Jews are invited to become pupils, the age of whom should be from twenty to thirty-five. More applications have thus far been received from Christians than from Jews, but it is hoped that the latter will respond more freely when the scheme has attained more publicity. It is an experiment which is deserving of all success.

The last entertainment given by the Harlem Y. M. H. A. was quite a success. The exercises consisted of songs and recitations, all of which were well rendered, and piano solos by the eminent Mr. S. B. Mills. The excellence of the entertainments provided by this association is a subject of general praise, and reflects much credit on the committee in charge.

MARCUS.

Local and Domestic.

Local notices of sociable events, from Congregations, Lodges, Benevolent and Literary Societies will be thankfully received. They must reach this office before Thursday morning, to be inserted in the issue of same week. No information will be taken notice of, unless it comes from responsible parties.

CHICAGO.

Last Sunday the Zion congregation held a general meeting to transact some financial and other important business.

Rev. M. Bonheim, of the Rodof Sholom congregation, will officiate at the B'nai Sholom Temple, on next Saturday morning.

The work in our Sabbath Schools is assuming a livelier and more hopeful character. The milder weather brings back many of the children who stayed away during the hard winter. If the parents and some of the School Committees would visit the Sabbath School once in a while, and take more interest in the religious education of young Israel in general, the teachers would do their work more cheerfully, and gain better results.

To-morrow (Saturday) evening, the Calico Ball of the North side Sewing Society, will take place at Klare's Hall, 72 and 74 North Clark Street. The affair is to be given in benefit of the Reese Hospital, and should be encouraged.

In the synagogue of Kebila B'nai Sholom, on Michigan Avenue, Mr. L. Levin chanted the prayers on the first day of Pessah. There was no sermon, the congregation being at present without a minister. They expect to have a new chasan to officiate before them.

The Amaranth Dramatic Club will celebrate its first anniversary by giving a dramatic entertainment on Sunday evening, April 24th, at the West End Opera House. The excellent talents of the members of this club have already gained them many friends. Lovers of the drama will do well to encourage this young but promising society. A fine entertainment is in store for all on this occasion.

The Cremieux Literary Society will give an entertainment, to conclude with a hop, April 29, at the West End Opera House. A well selected programme will conclude with the popular drama "The Loan of a Lover." This is a young society, and it is hoped that all the friends will encourage it, and not fail to be present at the entertainment.

At a meeting of the North side Hebrew congregation, which was held on last Sunday, a committee was appointed to complete the purchase of a lot for the erection of a synagogue. Mr. B. Maudl has kindly volunteered his services to collect the moneys subscribed for that purpose, and M. B. Gradle was appointed Treasurer. The lot which that congregation acquires is a very desirable piece of property, eminently suited for the purpose of the congregation.

Rabbi Todros Tiktin, of Calvarie, Poland, has returned again to his former field of action, to the city of Chicago. Mr. Tiktin had previously officiated as minister in the congregation "Beth Hamidrash Hagadol." But in 1876 he resigned his position, and went back to his native country, leaving behind a great number of friends who appreciated in him the learned talmudical scholar, and the generally esteemed gentleman. His friends and countrymen are now highly enjoyed to be able to again welcome their former spiritual guide in their midst.

The time is approaching when many well-known and representative men of American Israel will assemble here in the convention of the Union of Am. H. congregations and the Rabbinical Association. There will come to Chicago many ministers, presidents and members of the most prominent Jewish congregations in the land, and no doubt the Chicago Israelites will know how to do honor to themselves by honoring these prominent guests. We would respectfully suggest that our congregations call a joint meeting to unite and appoint committees to receive and entertain the delegates to the conventions.

The following is a list of new subscriptions to the funds of an "Home for the Aged and Infirm" which District No. 4, K. S. B. is about to establish—additional to the list reported in No. 148 JEWISH ADVANCE.

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